

Colorado WHIP Plan – FY 2007-2012

June 2006

Objectives:

Colorado has two objectives for WHIP in FY 2007-2012. These objectives are as follows:

- 1) To improve habitat for declining or at risk species to avoid the need for further listings under the ESA
- 2) Improve habitat for the recovery of federal or state listed threatened and endangered species

Habitat Objectives:

Input from Local Work Groups (LWGs) and the State Technical Committee's (STC) Wildlife Subcommittee have identified the following targeted habitats for Colorado WHIP:

Riparian, wetland, and stream-both warm and cold water

Shortgrass prairie

Shrublands including sandsage, sagebrush-steppe, and mountain shrub habitats

Mid and tall grass prairie and other rangeland

Forest including pinon-juniper

Priority Species:

Each year the State Technical Committee will review the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and prioritize species using the Colorado Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS).

Special Projects:

The Wildlife Subcommittee may come up with some special projects in areas where LWGs were not convened. The State Conservationist may consider reserving some funds for special projects. The WHIP manual, Part 517.13f, permits the State Conservationist to approve special projects that are proposed by LWGs or through a locally led process if the project provides important, high priority wildlife habitat that would not be adequately addressed through the WHIP State ranking criteria.

Fund Allocation:

Funding will be based on proposals sent to the wildlife subcommittee of the State Technical Committee that most closely fit the ranking and screening tools.

Eligible Practices:

All practices in the Field Office Technical Guide except windbreaks and shelterbelts on grasslands are eligible for WHIP if the Wildlife Habitat Development Plan demonstrates how the selected practices benefit wildlife. Although windbreaks and shelterbelts provide benefits for some wildlife species, the Wildlife Subcommittee agreed these practices do not fit Colorado's objectives for the WHIP when they are used to convert grassland to trees and shrubs. With several of our native grassland wildlife species struggling to maintain populations, the Wildlife Subcommittee feels we should emphasize those struggling species and their habitats rather than creating more habitat for non-native species.

Ranking System:

Colorado will use a RFP format to deliver the WHIP. This system will allow large-scale projects with significant beneficial effects for priority species to be funded. Proposals will be ranked and recommended for funding by the Wildlife Subcommittee of the State Technical Committee. Sponsors for multiple applicant proposals will develop screening/ranking tools to prioritize individual projects within the proposal area. Those screening/ranking tools will be reviewed by NRCS State Office program managers for compliance with program policy.

Proposed Budget:

Colorado requests \$1,000,000 annually to adequately fund priority projects.

Partnerships:

The following are major partners in WHIP:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Colorado Division of Wildlife
Pheasants Forever
Quail Unlimited
Ducks Unlimited
Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory
Trout Unlimited
The Nature Conservancy
Conservation Districts
Colorado State Forest Service
National Wild Turkey Federation
Joint Ventures

Criteria for Measuring Program Success:

Expected results from WHIP are installation of practices as discussed above. The following items will be tracked to help measure program success:

Acres of upland wildlife habitat management
Acres of wetland habitat management
Acres of riparian wildlife habitat
Acres of aquatic wildlife habitat management
Acres of threatened or endangered species habitat benefited
Acres under contract
Number of applications received
Total dollar value of applications
Number of individuals and groups funded (by status code)
Dollar value of partner contributions
Dollar value of participant contributions

In addition to tracking the above items, annual quality assurance reviews will be conducted.